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A Dilettante to the Death.

[From the London Musical World.]

Leopold I., Emperor of Germany, was born for harmony. Little suited for the profession of arms, and not desirous of running the risks of any battle, he never appeared at any siege, or at the head of his troops. However, as he ascended the throne when Europe was in a state of continual agitation, he did as all sovereigns then did, waged wars; but he waged them by his substitutes, namely, his generals, who were neither the least learned nor the least fortunate generals of a period as fertile in celebrated men as in great events.

Music was for him the truest of all religions, and he was a most fervent worshipper at its shrine. Having rendered himself familiar, at an early age, with all the mysteries of the science of sounds, he boasted and congratulated himself that he possessed philosophy and serenity of soul, and that he owed them to the cultivation of the divine art.

Early in the morning, on getting up, he had some one to play to him, or else played himself, to disperse the melancholy impressions produced in his mind by agitated sleep, a cloudy sky, or the innumerable causes of vexation incident to his position as a reigning sovereign; he said it was the only way to become a man again—good and humane; that when the hearing is occupied and captivated, it neutralizes the gross appetites of all the other senses, idealizes matter, and makes one believe in the soul. When he felt he was about to give way to passion, he calmed himself, like Saul, by listening to the sweet and tender tones of some melody, especially that of the minuet, "Quel caprice," which he had parodied, for he was a good composer: he used to write some very pretty harmonic canons (with one *n*), while the cannons (with two *ns*) of his army were thundering away in Europe. He was so enchanted with the canons played on the piano by a Pole named Kontski, great-grandfather of the present brothers Kontski, that he ennobled him. Kontski served in Sobieski's army, and, by his acquirements as an artist, was instrumental in compelling the Turks to raise the siege of Vienna. The valiant Pole's double canons must, therefore, have been doubly pleasing to the Emperor. Leopold recompensed in a different fashion the Count de Serin, a noble Hungarian, who had summoned the Turks into the empire. Despite Serin's agreeable voice, which Leopold liked very much, he had the Count's head cut off, so as to prevent his again singing the hymn of revolt and treason. He had two other Hungarian nobles, Nadasti and Franzipani by name, served in the same way.

What this imperial dilettante loved most about the victories obtained by his General Montecuculi, by the famous John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, and by other commanders, was the pleasure of having Te Deums sung in the Cathedral at Vienna, to celebrate their successes.

Being one of those who signed the treaty of the Peace of Ryswick, he was on the point of taking part in the grand concerted piece, composed with reference to the Spanish succession—the right of Louis the Fourteenth's grandson to the throne of Spain being destined to contestation, a concerted piece which subsequently plunged Europe into war—when he felt that the principle, the springs of life in him were performing a fugue. A philosopher, a Christian, an epicurean, a musician, he sent for his medical man, his confessor, and the musicians of his chapel. He ordered the first to inform him, as nearly as possible, how much time he had still to live—and, on learning, apparently without any emotion, that the torch of the imperial life would be extinguished

simultaneously with that day—that in a few hours all would be over for him, he granted an hour of time to the priest, and then, having taken leave of him, exhaled his last sighs, drowned his last gasp, in floods of harmony. His face was brightened by the different emotions produced by music that was religious, martial and sensual in turn. He expired gently, murmuring in a recitative which harmonized with a sweet mysterious melody, some vague, detached words, seeming to say:

"La musique est pour moi le ciel qui va s'ouvrir—
Elle m'apprend à vivre et m'apprend à mourir."

Thus died, in 1705, Leopold I., Emperor of Germany, a cunning diplomatist, a hypocrite and a coward, for some; for others, an adroit politician, firm or prudent, as the occasion required; a gentle and benevolent philosopher; and, more especially, a man who, by love for musical art, contributed to place Germany at the head of those nations which have distinguished themselves by their taste and their aptitude for the science of harmony.

"Lohengrin" in Bologna.

THE SOCIAL UNIFICATION OF ITALY—BOLOGNA—
OBJECTS OF INTEREST—HOW "LOHENGRI" WAS
PRODUCED—ITS EFFECT UPON THE AUDITORS—
WAGNER AT HOME—A CRITIC'S ANALYSIS OF
HIS MUSIC.

(Correspondence of the Daily Advertiser.)

Naples, January, 1872.

I little thought when I was making my digest of the report of the royal musical commission last summer, and noting how there had crept even into that document the natural Italian antipathy general to the *raisonné* coldness that characterizes so much of German music, and especially to the abstruse originalities of Wagner and his disciples, that I should so soon make one of a crowded audience in a great Italian musical centre, in order to hear "Lohengrin" repeated in the Italian language, and by Italian artists. Yet thus has the whirligig of time brought about its revenges; and while Verdi's "Don Carlos" has fallen dead in Italy, and his latest work has been obliged to seek its first public in Cairo, Wagner has crossed the frontier, and with the trumpets of "Rienzi" has summoned to an almost unconditional surrender that stern stronghold of Italian tradition and devotion—the conservatory of Bologna—has triumphed, and has followed the pealing choruses of that blatant opera with the swan-song and the bridal strains of "Lohengrin."

That this is a real triumph, no one who knows Italy at all will hesitate to admit. Scarcely in England can the old established order of things hold firmer sway. To be sure there is the difference between negative and positive to be allowed for; England binds you to an antiquated prescription, while Italy responds to your entreaty for an innovation with a placid "Non si costuma"—"tis not our wont." But the railways are working a wonderful change in Italy in all respects. Not alone do they set at naught the brigand, who still makes the Calabrian roads a peril to the rich proprietor who would pass them unaccompanied by his escort of *carabinieri*, or trusty family retainers, and open up, as in all other countries, new and easy avenue for the interchange of commodities and the extension of commerce; but they are daily promoting the union of Italians one to another, and of Italy to the nations which lie above and beyond her. In every chief station of Italy can be bought, at a reduction of from thirty to forty-five per cent, circular tickets, valid for from twenty to fifty days, the holders of which can travel over corresponding sections of the peninsula, passing from line to line, and stopping at almost any intermediate point which they may choose, the only formality being the enforced enregistering by the station-masters upon the ticket, at each departure, the name of the next stopping-place selected. In like manner one can pass out of Italy by the Brenner or the Semmering, and make a circuit through Austria, Southern Germany and the Tyrol, re-entering Italy at the opposite point. As

yet the Italians do not avail themselves largely of these so-called "international" tickets, for they have no undue fondness for the German language and manners; but they are beginning to journey within their own borders, and to find out that, in spite of the radical differences—and half repugnances, too, sometimes—which exist between Milanese and Neapolitan, Venetian and Roman, there is yet enough of common desire and interest, of kinship and of mutual regard, to be the making of a united, a prosperous and a respected people.

If the Italians, however, do not go out, the Germans do come in, and since the close of the war they are coming in crowds. Strolling in the *Villa Nazionale*, or lounging through the vast corridors of the museum, one hears constantly the Teutonic tongue busy with its consonants and gutturals, or asking information in grammatical Italian from which every atom of melody has been crushed out. I could believe that to-day there are more German visitors in Naples than Americans and English united. And all through Italy are Germans established in commerce, in arts and sciences, and in petty trade. The best demonstrator of anatomy at the great clinical hospital of the city is a German; the chief oculist-professor of the university, though an Italian by birth, is much more a German in education, in habits of thought, and even in accent; many of the strong banking and mercantile houses are German, and there are German professors who teach the rhetorical elegances of Italian to the native pupils, while one of the few known comprehenders and expounders of Hegel is Vera, professor of the philosophy of history to the University of Naples. The completion of the excellent route through the Brenner pass wonderfully developed communication, and the stream that flows to and fro so constantly has as constantly left some trace of itself along the line of its course. New ideas, in North Italy at least, are not such *bêtes noires* as once they were, and if they are not all and wholly accepted, they serve at any rate to leaven the mass of old thoughts and habits and to quicken them.

Bologna is, in spite of all its self-esteem and self-confidence, a very good place for the planting of new ideas. Its famous old schools were in their highest estate most catholic; they welcomed their ten thousand students from all nations, and taught them according to their talents, not according to their own theories; they let the learned speak and teach in their halls, without distinction of nationality or of sex; they encouraged the discoverer and the inventor, and they gave to science some of its heartiest impulses. And to-day, when those schools hold their glory but as a legacy from the past, one can feel in the character of the city a double sentiment—trust in local tradition and respect for universal intelligence. For this very reason the medical art, which has been in a decadent state in all Italy, shows probably less trace of antiquated dogma and practice in Bologna than in most other cities which have not a considerable number of English or German or French doctors and surgeons to enlighten the whole body of the profession.

And again, it is easy for new ideas to reach Bologna. The city possesses many items of interest, such and so disposed that even the typical traveller who goes about the world "doing places," finds a single day too little for him. The great basilica of San Petronio; the quaint, round church of San Stefano, with its seven subterranean chapels; the academy, rich in its dark, sturdy Domenichinos and Caraccas, its paler Guidos, and the olive Saint Cecilia of Raphael—all pictures to be seen before the religious splendors of the Venetian school; these with the tumbling towers, the miles of shadowy arcades and the curious streets and squares, are a deal in themselves. But beside these, which all lie handily within the city walls, there are the suburban attractions of the old monastery of San Michele in Bosco, where excavations are revealing many things of antiquarian interest; of the high-perched church of the Madonna di San Luca, from under whose colonnades, stretching for a mile along the hill-side, are to be had exquisite views of the Apennines, the diversified sweep of town and country at their feet, and the Adriatic, dotted with parti-colored sails, melting away in misty whiteness to the far eastward; and, finally, of the great Campo Santo, most original among burial

grounds, and sheltering in the marble galleries which enclose its acres of simple cross-marked sods, so many monuments which delight the eye and which satisfy the mind, not so much perhaps because they are complete and consistent to their last detail, as because their fancy is fond and free, and their sentiment sincere and sympathetic. For myself I know no funeral tribute more touching and more fascinating at once, than that monument of the Maiani family, with its sombre portal of black marble, and its sad, sweet mourner sunk in all the abandonment of desolate grief upon her knees beside it, her clasped hands drooping listlessly, and her head fallen back against the door-post, the eyelids closed and the lips half parted in the deep weariness of silent, tearless grief; again and again have I turned back to it, half-fancying to behold in the dim light of the aisle a real woman, and waiting for the relief of her first sigh to break the still suspense. There, too, are the Popoli monument, with its twin angels mounting to the Saviour's out-stretched arms; the statue, tall and bold, of Murat, with trophies at his feet; chapel after chapel with carved madonna or saint, and many a commoner tomb, bearing no bust or sculptured wreath, but with a handful of immortelles and a little epitaph in which fact and fancy are blended with that delicacy and naturalness which no language but the Italian permits, and which give a pleasure to the loitering reader, even although the name embalmed is all unknown and the story, as such, unheeded.

Few, therefore, of the travellers brought into the spacious railway station of Bologna by the three great lines that centre there from France via Milan, from Germany via Verona, and from Austria via Trieste and Venice, pass on without making some stay in the old city, and it would be a sorry chance if they did not impart as well as derive something.

Accordingly I was quite prepared—knowing that "Rienzi" had previously made almost a *furor*—for the excitement which I found on the subject of "Lohengrin," when I paused in Bologna on my return from Germany in November, to refresh there many a pleasant memory. People with whom I spoke were full of tales of boxes ordered by telegraph, and of curious auditors who had come from all sorts of out-of-the-way corners of Italy on purpose to hear the extraordinary composition. When the pouring rain in which I arrived had somewhat abated, I strolled out to the theatre to secure a place for the next representation. Although in Germany I had self-sacrificingly listened to about as much Wagner as can be borne in a single season by any but a nerveless man, I was most anxious to see the effect of this opera—on the whole, the author's best in respect of evenness, clearness and simplicity—upon an Italian audience of the best stamp, musically educated and disposed, but of unshaken faith in the idea that vocal music, at least, must have melody for its harmony to cling to, if it is to have any living worth, just as much as a body must hold a soul to be redeemed from common clay. In the theatre I found an old official, most enthusiastic about the performance. "*Lei deve sapere*," said he, "*che per noi altri Italiani, questa non è musica; ma come rappresentazione è bellissima, anzi unica.*" He verified to me the fact that musical people had come from all Italy to hear the opera, and told me that the machinist, scenic artist and stage director had all been sent to Munich to study the effects with a view to a close imitation. Furthermore, that so many *forestieri*, habituated to higher prices than those of the theatre, and estimating their places chiefly by what they cost, had attended the Wagner nights, that the manager had been obliged to put in one special row of stalls at double the price of the ordinary orchestra seats, which were usually all gobbled up eagerly by such visitors as had purses long enough to lodge themselves at the Hotel Brun. But I could not get from him any hearty indorsement even at second-hand, from his fragments of lobby criticism, of "Lohengrin," for the composer—only for the performers.

On the evening of performance the *Teatro Comunale*,—a spacious and handsome room, finished in gold and white, and having five tiers of boxes, and of perhaps two-thirds the size of San Carlo,—was punctually filled with an audience of intelligent aspect, which gave the closest attention throughout the evening. To my great satisfaction I observed very few of those "nice young men," who are so numerous in most Italian audiences, and who have apparently no other object in life than to wear creaseless lavender kids, to ogle the rest of the company through infinitesimal opera-glasses, to talk aloud in the *piano* passages, and to fall back in their chairs rapt and speechless when the ballet begins. Indeed, at this moment I can only recall two, who occupied one of two funny little triangular pens, built outside of the

* The gentleman must know that for us, Italians, this is not music; but as a representation it is most beautiful, nay unique.

box range, just at the corner of the stage, against the columns of the proscenium arch. One was a small, pallid, inefficient-looking youth in a Daniel Webster dress-coat; the other, big and burly, with hair of the deep, dull Italian red, and a face as flat as a prize-fighter's, who seemed to glory in his ugliness, and in every *entr'acte* rose and plumed himself like a peacock. But their presence was a very slight disturbing element; for when the big one had exhausted himself in a tussle with the *libretto*, and the small one was on the point of being utterly lost in *ennui*, they bethought themselves of a mysterious door, artfully blending with the panneling behind them, and slipped secretly away, perhaps that "from the cool cisterns of the midnight air" their spirits might "drink repose."

Upon the performance I need not dwell. It was good in all its parts, and in some respects rose to positive excellence. After the *mise-en-scène* and the really perfect *ensemble* of the opera at Vienna,—the only place where I have ever seen operas given as they ought to be, from greatest to least particular,—the spectacular effects and the singing could but suggest unfavorable comparison. But the orchestra left nothing to desire; Signor Mariani, an eminent professor of the Conservatory, directed, and all the purely orchestral passages were given with a German accuracy and an Italian *anima* combined, the whole band moving, not like one machine, but like one man.

I had already had the opportunity of watching the effect of Wagner's music in his own stronghold, Munich, upon an audience of his followers and believers, when "Rheingold" and "Die Walküre" were given, as well as upon the Viennese public (unequaled, possibly, in inherited tradition and taste), when "Lohengrin" and "Rienzi" were performed. Now I had around me an audience of the most sensitive, if not the most sensible, people in the world, so far as music is concerned, and the representation assumed for me rather the guise of an interesting psychological experiment. In Munich one artist, rather inclined to Wagnerism, was won to confess to me that he could not understand the "Walküre," which he thought intolerable after the first act, and to add that he didn't know what would become of the musical world if the author should make an advance upon himself in the two operas, which he threatens to bring out as necessary to continue and complete the "Rheingold" or "Walhalla" series, corresponding to the step he has taken from "Rheingold" to the "Walküre." In Vienna another artist said to me—because I was going away and could not spread his heresy,—"Wagner is a great man and a genius, to make his way into the first opera-theatres of the world with even his most peculiar works; but he has done a monstrous injury to the art and cause of music." In both these cities I saw a certain blankness spread over the faces of the people when what I should call, for want of a better nomenclature, Wagner's mythological music, began; and I could discover a live interest only when he had deigned to adhere to heretofore recognized principles of composition and combination. Astonishment, perplexity, stupefaction almost, there were often; but pleasure and applause only when a rare bit of melody came to refresh, or a choral or orchestral movement to inspire; such occasional movements were welcomed with eagerness, and the audiences made as though they would fain prostrate them. At Bologna, I observed the same results, only more easily and clearly, because in a fairly constituted Italian audience the magnetic effect of the national *simpatia* or *antipatia* is felt long before it is manifested. There was no turning away, or yawning or chattering when the *dramatis personæ* were rehearsing their stories or their feelings in measures as calculated and as dry as an algebraic problem, but a peculiar petrifying chill seemed to pervade the room; on the contrary, when a little air, like *Lohengrin's* swan-song, a motived chorus or even a melodic phrase succeeded, there was an instant warmth to be felt kindling, and the *bravos* seemed to say themselves, so spontaneously they rose. As for that wedding of voices and instruments in *Elsa's* bridal procession, it fairly made a rapture everywhere, and the celebrated introduction to the third act was redemanded with an impetuosity that would not be denied. There was no pretence of "not being quite educated up" to an appreciation of the discordant, nor of being impressed by the vague and abstruse, but honest, straight-forward likes and dislikes, and undisguised reasons thereof. Italy was frank, having no cause to be otherwise; Germany was disingenuous, because—well, perhaps because she is too philosophical to be simple.

I have known something of Wagner ever since the old days when Bergmann used to turn to the audience at the Germania rehearsals and say: "Ve play naow, overture, Taunhäuser!" and after this summer's experiences I feel as though I had gained a sufficient insight into his ways to pass some comment

upon him. *Imprimis*, he sets out apparently with the intention of making his singers deliver their text as if singing were natural—that is to say, in arbitrary musical intervals, as actors do their speeches. Hence, as a rule, no sentence or phrase is ever repeated, but the current of monologue or dialogue flows on steadily, each little group of words being set by some abstract principle, such as the mechanical elocutionist prescribes for the delivery of a given paragraph. In "Rheingold" this plan of continuity is so adhered to that there is not an instance of silence, and the curtain never falls until the end. But this principle is of course false, and should be discarded, because it leads to ungracious results. "People do not talk in blank verse or musical measures; therefore, as we accord to the Shakesperian actor a liberty of delivery which we should refuse to a "character" player, simply because when Shakespeare passes from the abstraction of the closet to the positiveness of the theatre the standard must become an artistic instead of an argumentative one,—so in the opera, which is thoroughly artificial in its fundamental idea, should we seek real beauty and delight, no less than approximate philosophical truth. Wagner is unable or unwilling to comprehend a situation *en bloc*; his treatment of it is disjointed and incoherent; no sooner has the tale begun to be told in one form, than it changes aspect, tonality and rhythm, and the ear, deluded by a melodious figure, is shocked by a sequence of strange and irrelevant intervals that perhaps, considered in the light of pure reason, or of the integral calculus, ought to correspond to the exact words of the moment, which is not by any means the purpose and scope of the opera as hitherto understood. Yet Wagner does not lack melody; he rarely denies it to his choruses, his orchestral parts are flowing, and every formal *intermezzo* has two or more voicings as rhythmical and pleasant as one could ask. He seems simply to have set himself determinedly against arias, cavatinas, cabalettas, and all such variety, because he desired to make a revolution, and there was no other way. Verdi has done the same in "Don Carlos," and as a consequence nearly the whole of a long evening is taken up with a drama in *recitative*, which would be a thousand times more interesting if the words were spoken naturally by the artists, and the few airs sung as songs introduced into a play, and the best of the instrumental portions retained as a melodramatic accompaniment to the action.

Again, Wagner is false to his own canons. He has censured most harshly such of his musical brethren as have had recourse to stage effects for enhancing those of their scores, while never man asked so much of the decorator and the machinist as he. "Rienzi" ends with a conflagration in Rome; the first part of "Rheingold" is under the waters of the Rhine, the second has a pair of giants, and in the third the gods mount up towards the skies over a "practicable" rainbow; in "Walküre" the goddesses ride on barebacked bridled horses across a bridge of clouds, and for a finale the heroine is burned up in a hollow tree, the flames running furiously all over the stage in pipes imitating the gnarled roots of a giant oak; while at all times thunder, lightning, tempest and clouds of real steam, rising from a perforated stage and tinted by the calcium lights, are elements as common to his hand as processions and banners and bands of trumpets to Meyerbeer, or Halevy, or Verdi.

But above all, Wagner in those later operas which constitute his new manner and which he himself lauds as the true music of the stage, strids with the human voice no sentiment and awakens no emotion; the priceless instrument is even less in his hands than the humblest integer of his orchestra, and the human element only retains such force or dignity as his studied combinations have been powerless to take away. This is perversity, not poverty; for Wagner knows how to weave a winning melody and how to thrill with majestic harmonies; but he is apparently reckless of results, and resolute to be a new Canute and give laws unto the infinite sea of sound.

John Braham.

(From the London Musical World, 1854.)

(Concluded from page 172.)

At fifty-four Braham might be said to have been in the zenith of his powers. The cause why singers lose their voices so soon arises either from a want of stamina in the constitution, or from a bad method of vocalizing. Braham's constitution is of iron, and has never been tampered with. Always moderate and careful, from temperament as well as prudential motives, he has never been led into excesses, and at this moment he presents one of the most remarkable instances of age joined to vigor of body and mind in existence. That Braham's method of singing belongs to the best school need, we think, scarcely be

advanced; he has too long stood in public estimation as a model for English singers, to render it doubtful. But, independently of the excellence of his style and method, another cause still more important tended to the preservation of his vocal powers. His voice was naturally so strong and of such unusual compass, that he was not obliged to overstrain it to produce his greatest effects. How many singers have been prematurely lost by exerting themselves to do more than nature intended them! M. Duprez, the celebrated French tenor, while yet a young man, was put *hors-de-combat* for the stage through his forced and continual endeavors to sing the *ut de poitrine* in *Guillaume Tell* and other operas; and Signor Tamberini, the most accomplished barytone the Italian opera ever boasted of, lost the beauty and power of his voice at the age of forty-six, by striving to roar like Signor Lablache in the "Suoni la tromba" duet in *I Puritani*. Braham had, fortunately, no cause to do violence to nature in any music. The strength and physical conformation of his lungs gave him immense force and sustaining power, and scarcely any note written for the tenor voice was too high for him. In a ballad he introduced into one of his own operas at Drury Lane he has been known to sing to D natural in *alt*, in his chest voice. Braham's voice was truly magnificent. Sonorous and metallic in quality, having the fullness and power of a barytone, it was also of exceeding sweetness. He who remembers the tenderness and exceeding pathos infused into some of the Scotch and English ballads must acknowledge how little in the shape of simple singing can be compared to it in the present day. Yet Braham's singing was not always as unaffected and plain as might have been desired. On his first return from Italy he was infected in no small degree with the prevailing mania for florid vocalization. Even the commonest ballads were overcharged by him with a superabundance of *floriture*; and he was not yet content with that pure and unforced expression which, in a few years after, became one of the special characteristics of his style. Braham, however, may be forgiven for being seduced into that vitiated taste which only followed the exigencies of the age, and conformed itself to popular requirement. These were the times, it must be remembered, of Mrs. Billington, Mme. Mara, Catalani, Tramezzani, David, Rubinelli, and others, all singers of the brilliant and extraordinary kind, who led the public by the nose, and induced composers to write exercises for the voice instead of simple tunes. The audiences of those days were not always pleased with the unadorned singing of Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. Dickens, or Mrs. Bland. They loved to be surprised rather than delighted, and were not satisfied if their hearts were touched, unless, at the same time, their ears were tickled and their understandings dazzled. Such, at this period, was the state of musical feeling in the popular mind, and to which Braham did not hesitate to subscribe when he came back from the continent. The singer had another motive which tempted him to adopt the prevailing style; his voice was extremely flexible, and no passage was too difficult for him to execute. Most of his early songs and duets indicate his leaning towards the florid school. In all probability at that time he hardly knew where his chief strength lay, and not until he had studied Handel's sacred music did he find out that the grand declamatory style was his forte. In recitative Braham has never been surpassed, and seldom equalled. His delivery of some of Handel's songs, such as "Jephtha's Rash Vow," "Comfort ye, my People," "Every Valley," "Waft her Angels," "Sound the alarm," and others, was particularly grand, chaste, and impressive. It was the excellence of his vocal elocution in sacred singing which procured for him the designation of the Siddons of the Lyric Drama.

Our own earliest impression of Braham dates back as far as 1830, when we heard him for the first time in *Masaniello*. His whole performance struck us as being astonishingly grand and powerful. Braham seemed, indeed, scarcely to act at all, yet so earnest and abstracted did he appear when singing, that we felt no loss in the absence of any histrionic display. Such were our subsequent feelings when we saw Rubini in *I Puritani*. It seemed as if an exhibition of acting would have been but an intrusion, disturbing the intense feeling awakened by his singing. In *Masaniello* we were almost awed at the volume of tone and energy exhibited by Braham in the *morceau* in D flat minor, in the second act: "Uprouse ye, manly hearts," where the Neapolitan fisherman first incites his companions to revolt. Braham's voice sounded like the blast of a trumpet throughout the theatre. We heard the opera for thirteen successive nights with renewed delight, and with increased admiration for the singer.

So great an artist as Braham could hardly have been before the public for more than half a century without producing the most decided influence on his

time, and, consequently, all those singers who have aimed at excellence in the declamatory style, have taken him for the model. But, however correct and safe an example Braham offered in his own person, it was by no means an easy task to follow him. The power and largeness of his voice, which rendered his delivery so grand and emphatic, could not be imitated; and without these qualities the singer is precluded from attaining the highest excellence in lyric declamation. Art may effect much to supply the deficiency of voice, but its want must be always seriously felt in vocal elocution. Braham produced a host of servile imitators, many of whom only caricatured his style and manner, but could not catch his beauties or his graces. There existed for many years a Braham-mania among the tenor-singers in England. Those who had strong voices belabored at the top of their lungs and imagined that this constituted their rivals of their great archetype in energy and power. Those, on the other hand, with weak voices copied his expression and feeling, and fancied by so close an imitation that they had made amends for their want of power. Still the model being good, imitation could hardly have failed to originate some beneficial consequences. Braham's fine elocution, his clear and distinct enunciation, his method of producing the notes, the blending the chest with the falsetto voice—one of his most striking merits—his correct judgment, and refined and classic taste, could not be entirely thrown away for so long a period upon the mass of vocalists; and there is no doubt that at the present time his influence prevails largely wherever oratorios and sacred works are performed.

In the year 1812 to so great a height had Braham's popularity risen, that he obtained almost unprecedented salaries at the two patent theatres, as well as at all the concerts and oratorios. He was also growing rich by means of his musical compositions, at which he labored most assiduously. His music, generally speaking, displays a vein of homely yet graceful melody, well adapted to please an English audience, which it seems was the highest aim of his ambition. For the copyright of some of his operas he was paid more liberally than any composer who wrote before him, and more than many others who came after him. He received, in 1804, no less than one thousand guineas for the music of *The English Fleet* in 1842. (Many years afterwards he sold his ballad, "The King, God bless him!" for eight hundred pounds, a sum greater than that paid to Rossini for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.)

The operatic works composed by Braham, in whole, or in part, were as follows:—*The Cabinet*, *The English Fleet* in 1842, *Out of Place*, *Thirty Thousand*, *Family Quarrels*, *The Paragraph*, *Kais*; or, *Love in the Deserts*, *Americans*, *the Devil's Bridge*, *False Alarms*, *Zuma*, *Novensky*, etc. The most popular of these were *The Cabinet*, *the English Fleet*, and *The Devil's Bridge*, which, until modern taste—whether false or true we shall not discuss in this place—drove the ballad opera almost entirely from the stage, were held in special estimation for many years.

Perhaps no singer ever went through a more extraordinary career than John Braham. From 1806 to 1816 he was engaged nearly every year as *primo tenore* at the Italian Opera, and sang invariably at one of the patent English theatres in the winter. At the Italian Opera he sang with Billington, Mme. Grassini (aunt of Grist), Mme. Fodor, Signor Naldi, etc., etc. He was the original Sesto when Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito* was brought out at the King's Theatre. He was the original Max in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, when it was produced at the Lyceum; and Weber wrote the music of Sir Huon, in *Oberon*, expressly for him. It was at the suggestion of Braham that Weber wrote the grand scena, "Oh, 'tis a glorious sight to see," which, nevertheless, is far from being the gem of the opera, admired and hacknied as it is.

To follow the career of Braham from the period about which we are now writing—from 1806 to 1816—to the present day (1854) would occupy more room than we can afford to a hurried sketch in these papers. From the moment that he gained the loftiest position as a vocalist in this country until he quitted the stage, he retained his place and his reputation, unperilled through all changes and vicissitudes, through prejudice and pique, through good and indifferent report, through party spirit and favoritism, through love of novelty inherent in the play-going public, through even the weariness supposed naturally to result from too frequent seeing and hearing the same artist. Indeed, in the case of Braham, it would seem as though his audiences were never tired of calling Aristides the Just. Assuredly nothing but talents and accomplishments of the highest order could have conducted to such a result. Braham, in his earliest days, as a singer, had to contend against the popularity of Inledon, one of the most gifted and remarkable vocalists this country ever produced;

but Braham's superior musical endowments, his greater art, and his knowledge and acquaintance with the Italian school, whereby he was enabled to master all varieties of singing, gave him many advantages over his great rival. While Inledon confined himself by necessity to English music—and even there his vocal powers were in a great measure restricted, Braham could roam discursive through every region of song, and adapt himself to each particular style. Inledon nevertheless, was the only dangerous antagonist Braham ever encountered on the English stage. Sinclair, who enjoyed for years a considerable reputation, was a singer of a different class altogether, and had no pretension to be compared to him in any respect; and the other tenor singers of the day, however meritorious and excellent, individually and in their appropriate places, are entitled to little consideration when speaking of Braham.

In the year 1835, Braham built and opened the St. James's Theatre, at a cost, it is said of thirty thousand pounds, and became the manager of an operatic company; and the same year he purchased the Colosseum at a large price, and provided a novel kind of entertainment in that splendid edifice. Both speculations, however, proved ruinous, and the fruits of many years' labor were swallowed up in a short space of time. The St. James's Theatre and Colosseum were disposed of at an enormous loss, and Braham again appeared on the stage under another management besides his own. From this time, though occasionally joining the opera troupes at Drury Lane, and elsewhere, his exertions were principally confined to the concert rooms and oratorios. In 1839, he played William Tell, in Rossini's opera of that name, and created a powerful impression in the part. None who heard him can easily forget his profoundly pathetic singing in the air with violoncello accompaniment, which Tell addresses to his son previous to his shooting the apple from his head. The music of the part of Tell is written for a barytone—not a high one—but Braham's power in the middle register, and depth in the lower tones, always enabled him to undertake barytone parts with some trifling transposition. In this respect he resembled the renowned Donzelli, whom we have heard one night singing the high tenor music of the Count Almaviva in the *Barbiere*, and the next night the barytone music of Count Almaviva in the *Nozze di Figaro*. But both Donzelli's and Braham's voices were exceptional; and we have no singer on the modern stage to which either of them may be compared. About this time, too, Braham appeared as the Don in *Don Giovanni*, at Drury Lane, and sang the music with a peculiar charm. The last time Braham appeared before the public, was in March, 1852, at the London Wednesday Concerts, when he was induced to enter into an engagement to give a series of final performances at Exeter Hall. These performances, in consequence of bad management, were never concluded, and thousands were thereby prevented from hearing Braham. Of the singing of the great tenor on that occasion, we shall only say, that if it were not equal to his best efforts in his best days, some forty years ago, it showed astonishing vigor and energy, and produced an effect, literally impossible to describe.

In one of the essays of Elia, written some thirty years or more since, the quaint and humorous Charles Lamb, writing of Braham in his usual off-hand way, thus adds one to the many opinions so frequently expressed, that to his good sense he was mainly indebted for his high standing in his profession:

"There is a fine scorn in Braham's face, which nature meant to be of —. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him. He cannot conquer the Shilboleth. How it breaks out when he sings, 'The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!' The auditors for the moment are Egyptians to him, and he rides over their necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him. Braham has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition."

It only remains to add that the renowned singer is now [1854] living in retirement, in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits. Approaching close upon his 80th year, he is still sound in mind and vigorous in body. That indomitable energy which exercised so powerful an influence over the fortunes of his art has not yet deserted him, and would not fail him in the hour of need. The sun has set on his glories forever, but their memories will remain to illumine the history of his art long after less perishable things have passed away without a record or a name.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

Wachtel.

We noticed in the last number of the *Atlantic* an article with the title of Music, and, although a criti-

cism on a criticism is perhaps unusual, in this case we trust it will not seem unjustifiable, and may teach the writer in the *Atlantic* that criticism is by no means abuse, and that when a writer attempts to speak of music he should first make sure that he thoroughly understands the subject of which he treats.

In the first place it is stated in reference to Wachtel, the German Tenor, that "he has undeniably a most superb tenor voice," that "there is no good or fine quality that his voice does not possess," and that "it has a magnetic power over the audience that is at times almost maddening." So far so good. But here the praise stops, and we find that Wachtel is "no artist in any high sense of the word," that "his phrasing is vulgar," "his vocalization bad," "his style wanting in dignity and simplicity, and though we may be electrified by his glorious chest C, yet this vocal phenomenon is a small compensation for his gross violation of all that is really artistic in singing."

These with other numerous faults make up a large list. But let us see how it is. Though he may not be called an artist in the highest sense of the word, as that would imply more general culture and refinement of feeling than he possesses, still his method is of the purest, and his voice has received the highest cultivation. He is the only Tenor now in the country and the only one we have had here for years (it is difficult to name another) thoroughly conversant with, and correctly using the three registers of the male voice: the low chest, the second chest, and the falsetto tones; and his transition from one to the other of these registers is wonderfully correct, and shows in itself the skilful and thorough cultivation of the voice. Particularly is this noticeable when he changes from the second chest to the falsetto, and so beautifully does his voice glide into the falsetto, that it is difficult to tell exactly when he changes, and sometimes all but impossible.

His phrasing, it is said is vulgar. If so, what must we call the phrasing of the generality of tenors whom we are forced to listen to in opera and concert? This is perhaps the respect in which it is most difficult to criticize a singer. It is a matter not clearly understood, and we know of no singer who keeps strictly to either the German or Italian method, and here Wachtel is no exception. His phrasing shows his Italian instruction, and is a combination of both schools. But he is not alone; as we have said, there is hardly an artist of the present day who sings in either school alone.

In vocalization it is most difficult to retain the full true tone, and at the same time render the words intelligible; and when we consider how intelligible his words are, without the slightest injury to the complete tones, we must grant that his vocalization is as nearly perfect as possible.

Now, as to his style which is "without dignity or simplicity,"—the true way to use the voice is in accordance with the anatomy of the throat, not straining the tones above or forcing them below their natural registers. Such is Wachtel's method of singing. Can anything be more "simple" or pure? It is true he is wanting in the sickly sentimentalism so common in the singers of to-day, and which is so apt to pass for expression and feeling. There is nothing of the sort in the man. What a relief it is to hear a singer free from these mere tricks, and to listen only to full and sonorous tones going directly, and with commanding effect, to the heart. Can we desire a better illustration of true dignity?

Finally, as to his "glorious chest C" so called. This expression involves a contradiction of much of this fault-finding. Is it not wonderful that Wachtel is able to bring his falsetto tones to such perfection that the audience, and among them, our so-called critics, are not able to detect the change from the second chest register to falsetto? And this is exactly what he does and nothing more,—no "vocal phenomenon," but simple pure art. He rarely goes

above Ab with the chest register, and his high C is a pure falsetto note, but so strong and pure that it is far superior to the false and strained tones of the majority of our Tenors, who, by forcing the vocal chords to an unnatural extent, not only ruin their voices but produce what to our ears is no music, only noise.

Our defence of the great singer is quite unnecessary so far as he is concerned, for Wachtel can speak or rather sing for himself; but, being lovers and students of music, we could not consent to allow the article in the *Atlantic* to go unnoticed.

Though Boston may not be pleased with such singing as Wachtel's, allow Philadelphia to add her voice to that of Europe in pronouncing him the greatest living Tenor. D. E. F.

Philadelphia, Jan. 24, 1872.

Wagner's Opinion of Liszt.

A CURIOUS BIT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

In a communication to his friends, recently published abroad by Richard Wagner, he says:

"I met Liszt, for the first time in my life, during my earliest sojourn in Paris, and, moreover, in the second period of that sojourn, when—humiliated, and seized with a feeling of disgust—I renounced all hope of, nay, more, all desire for, a Parisian success, and was in the state of revolt which I have already described at length against the artistic world there. When I met him Liszt offered a complete contrast to myself in his nature and position. In that world in which I had yearned to enter and shine when, in poor circumstances, I longed for greatness, Liszt had from his earliest youth grown up unconsciously, and become its wonder and delight at a time when I, touched by the coldness and want of kindness it had shown me, was cast off so far that, with the full bitterness of one undecieved, I was able to perceive its hollowness and nothingness. Thus Liszt was sometimes more than a man to be merely suspected by me. I had no opportunity of making myself known to him in my true nature, and by my works; the only knowledge he could have of me was superficial, and so was the manner of his meeting me; this was very natural in him—especially when we take into account that he was a man into whose presence individuals of the most different sorts forced their way in large numbers every day. I was not at that period, in a frame of mind to inquire, justly and calmly, the motive of conduct which—of itself friendly and obliging—could only wound me. With the exception of this occasion, I never called on Liszt again, and—certainly without my knowing him, but on the contrary, with my entertaining a decided feeling of antipathy against making his acquaintance—he remained, as far as I was concerned, one of those whom we consider foreign and hostile to us naturally.

"What I uttered while in this humor, which was an enduring one, subsequently happened to reach his ear, and at the time, too, when I had created so sudden a sensation in Dresden with my *Rienzi*. Liszt felt puzzled at being so violently misunderstood, as, from what I said, it appeared that he was, by a man whom he scarcely knew, and whom it now struck him as not being quite beneath his while to know. At present, when I look back, there is something unusually touching in the earnest endeavors, continued with astonishing endurance, with which Liszt tried to inspire me with a different opinion of himself. At first he still knew nothing of my works, and thus there was no artistic sympathy, properly so speaking, in his desire to become better acquainted with me; but merely the purely human desire not to allow the continuance of any disharmony, that may have accidentally arisen, in his relations with another; and in this desire there was perhaps mixed up an indescribably tender doubt as to whether he might not perhaps have actually wounded my feelings. Any one acquainted with the boundlessly selfish loveliness and unfeeling regardlessness manifested when we come into contact with one another in all our social relations, but especially in the relations of artists towards each other, cannot fail to be more than astounded, he must feel thoroughly entranced, when he receives such proofs of an individual's behavior to him as were showered upon me by that extraordinary man.

"But I was not yet in a position to appreciate the unusual charm and ravishing nature of Liszt's disposition, which is, above all things, amiable and loving. I at first regarded with astonishment his approaches to me, and even frequently felt inclined to supply that astonishment with almost trivial nourishment. Liszt now attended in Dresden a representa-

tion, which he was nearly compelled to bring about by force, of *Rienzi*, and from all possible places visited by him in the course of his virtuosos progress, I received, sometimes through one person and sometimes through another, proofs of his restless eagerness to inform others of the pleasure he had derived from my music, and thus—as I should almost prefer assuming—quite unintentionally, to act as a propagandist for me. This occurred at a time when, on the other hand, it kept becoming clearer to me that I should fail to achieve any outward success with my dramatic labors. Now, exactly in the same degree as this utter unsuccessfulness was more plainly, and at length decidedly, manifested, Liszt managed by his most individual efforts, to establish a supporting asylum for my art. He gave up his peregrinations and—though at home in the utmost splendor of the most flourishing cities of Europe—settled down in the modest little town of Weimar, where he took up the stick as conductor. It was there I met him the last time, when—still uncertain as to the real character of the persecution that threatened me—I was staying on Thuringian soil, during the flight which was at length necessary from Germany. On the day that, from information received, it became clearer and clearer, and at length perfectly certain, that my personal position was one of the utmost peril, I saw Liszt conduct a rehearsal of my *Tannhäuser*, and was astonished at perceiving, from what he did, my second self in him; what I felt when I conceived the music, he felt as he had it performed; what I wanted to say as I wrote it down, he said as he caused it to re-echo through the place. Strange, through the love of this most uncommon of friends, I obtained at the very moment I myself was homeless, the actual and long-desired home, always sought in the wrong place, and never found, for my art. When I was banished, to rove in foreign lands, he who had roved the world through withdrew to a little spot and made it a home for me. Everywhere and evermore thinking of me, always rapid and decided in his help, when help was required, with a heart opening wide to everyone of my wishes, and with the most devoted love for my whole being—Liszt became for me what I never found before, and that to such a degree that one cannot grasp its fullness until it really surrounds him in all its extent."

Liszt and Rubinstein in a Symphony Concert—What the Critics Say.

1. The *Daily Advertiser*, representing, we suspect, about the average impression of the audience, writes as follows of the Seventh Concert, which (having its imagination so excited with the "Future," no doubt) it unwittingly calls "the twenty-seventh":

We confess to something akin to dissatisfaction with yesterday's symphony concert programme; or, to express it more definitely, there was some jarring on our finer musical feelings. There was at least one piece which contained strangely insufficient attempts at beautiful expression of musical feeling. In Franz Liszt's symphonic poem, "*Tasso: Lamento e Trionfo*," the great pianist truly expended much strength in striving to find a suitable garb for his musical thought. To express the lament he repeats a very lugubrious motive by apparently every instrument in the orchestra, which, by the way, he handles with masterly effect. To express madness he hauls in the triangle, the chinelles and the flauto-piccolo; and to express—no one knows what—he employs chromatic passages, which those masters of musical expression, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, reserve for portraying a raging storm of the elements. Mozart, it is true, uses them in his "Don Giovanni" in that terrible ghost and perdition scene. But Liszt, like a third-rate actor, struts and snorts and grows red in the face; like a fourth-rate scene painter he throws potfuls of dabs on the unfortunate canvass. With exceeding strength he wields ponderous engines to lift up a feather. He exaggerates; he vainly seeks for the strongest expression; he is overpowering, but tedious. It reminds one of the pygmies stealing Jove's thunder and then not knowing what to do with it. There stands Beethoven intent on expressing similar emotions. His "*Coriolan*" tells us of anguish as does Liszt's *Tasso*. The loving entreaties of mother and wife in "*Coriolan*," their plaintive utterances when they see him unyielding, are not so far different, essentially, from kindred emotions in *Tasso*. Yet how simply do Beethoven's harmonies, how truly do his melodies, how chastely do his instruments express all this. The proper motto for Liszt's piece might read thus: Great skill, very great effort, exceeding much noise, but very little creative genius. Not that we would condemn the piece altogether. There is an abundance of fine instrumental effort; there are some splendid motives, well worked

up; there is power and beauty in some parts, but the whole lacks that quality which only genius can give to any work of art,—the simple and true expression of the idea. It sparkles, it glitters, it shines like an overdressed belle, gorgeously got up and overloaded with finery. We are becoming accustomed, now-a-days, to tremendous efforts in the way of music. Meyerbeer, Verdi, Wagner, by their operas, Liszt by his gigantic piano-works, full of the utmost force, have educated the popular musical ear down to a point where any amount of noise seems bearable, any harmonic contortions admissible, any eccentricity in the conduct of melodies proper. We think that a cure might be effected by restricting the musical public to an exclusive diet of such works of force and pathos. Why not play all the symphonic poems in two concerts? There are nine of them, we believe. Would it not be a wise thing to be done with them once and for all?

The other modern piece was of a different character—Rubinstein was a man of genius—of creative genius, we mean. And beautiful were many of the motives he employed, and well worked up. And yet the results were not such as the enormous difficulties would warrant. The effect was disproportionate to the means employed. The second movement was very beautiful, tender, pure; the last dramatic to a high degree. The resemblance of the first motive to that hacknied chorus in "Martha" did not detract from the freshness of the movement. And yet there was laboring after effect. The idea was not expressed with the fullest truth in many cases. Especially did we find this in several melodies. Strange progressions of the melodic motive, mannerisms in introducing unusual dissonances and in resolving them are common. The sense of musical beauty, even, is offended, in two instances at least, where doubling thirds and sevenths makes the chord absolutely painful. After all this, however, we gladly say that the work is good and affords pleasure. Mr. Lang made easy work of the difficulties, playing his octaves, *arpeggi* and other difficulties with the utmost *aplomb* and with unusual fire. We could wish that he had had a more effective piece to play, say some beautiful Mendelssohn Concerto. Still we admire his playing none the less.

Slight differences of intonation in the reeds and wood instruments and one or two infelicities that happened to the oboe and horn excepted, the orchestra did exceedingly well, playing all the pieces with finest regard to shading and expression. We thought we noticed a more pleasant piano than on former occasions, where it was almost too fine-spun. The opening and closing overtures and the Haydn symphony were thoroughly enjoyable, and we could not help congratulating ourselves and the audience that there were at least three perfect master-works performed. Especially did the symphony please us. It completely restored our good humor, a good part of which had taken flight before Liszt's ponderous efforts.

LISZT AND THE DAILY ADVERTISER.

To the Editors of the Boston Courier:

A pre-requisite to discriminating musical criticism is that the critic shall understand the music he is criticizing, which, unfortunately for art, does not appear to be the case with the *Advertiser's* musical critic in his review of Liszt's *Tasso* in the Symphony concert of yesterday. Musical criticism is something more than a mere expression of likes or dislikes; it is, or should be, a careful discrimination of the merits and demerits of the work; and to say that Liszt "struts and enorts and grows red in the face like a third-rate actor," or that he "throws potfuls of daub like a fourth-rate scene painter," is to exhibit lack of taste equalled only by ignorance of the true character of the music he undertakes to criticize. If the critic does not see the beauty or grandeur of such music it is not the fault of the composer, and the critic's vague talk about "lack of creative genius" and failure to embody an idea will not convince the many, who at that concert thoroughly enjoyed the *Tasso* "poem," of their lack of taste in liking what he is pleased to call "harmonic contortions." As a music lover I would heartily thank the Harvard Symphony Association for the enjoyment they gave some of us yesterday, in their presentation of Liszt's Symphonic Poem, and at the same time protest against the indiscriminate censure indulged in by the critic above mentioned, as lowering the standard of musical criticism.

Cambridge, February 2.

THOROUGHLY OUT OF HUMOR.

(From the Saturday Evening Gazette.)

The Seventh Harvard Symphony Concert on Thursday afternoon was well attended, but the programme proved less interesting than any hitherto presented this season. Beethoven's fine overture to *Coriolanus*, which began the performance, was fairly played, though we fancy we have heard it given with more precision and color than it received on this

occasion. It was followed by an unmeaning and bombastic piece of sentimentalism by Liszt, entitled "*Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*," which is remarkable for nothing but an obtrusive charlatanism, and a blatant vulgarity and poverty of ideas. It is utterly without form, and if it have a purpose beyond noise and eccentricity, it was not made apparent. As a work of art it is a complete failure. Why such works are played when so many really fine compositions remain in comparative obscurity, is beyond our power to conceive or explain. They should be left to the appreciation of that future for which they are written. The present can get along very well without them. The beautiful and true in art find no place in this rapid and long-drawn piece of bombast, which is overflowing with extreme discords and bizarre instrumental effects. When a fragment of melody appears, it is trite and vulgar; and when an idea crops out through the dreary stibble of purposeless modulations, it is utterly incomprehensible, owing to the tasteless manner in which it is presented. We have had enough of such unmeaning vagaries. The gabbling of a madman is always painful to listen to. Liszt is a mere musical juggler, who keeps up a volley of nonsensical talk in order to direct attention from the manner in which his silly tricks are performed. When the trouble has been well taken, the result is but a trick, after all. Liszt's orchestral works are an insult to art, and are undeserving the time bestowed upon them. They are a riddle even to the educated musician, and what they must be to the unprofessional public baffles surmise. It is time things were called by their right titles, no matter whose name they may bear, and under this condition Liszt's "*Tasso*" can claim no higher merit than that of meaningless jargon. What is bad, is bad, no heed from what brain it may emanate. A respect for mere reputation is folly. This symphonic poem—heaven save the mark!—is a piece of gaudy musical harlotry, decked out in glowing robes of many colors, selected without taste and worn without decency. It attracts for a moment by its vulgar glare, but never charms. It is lewd and coarse in every sense. There is nothing real about it. Its very sensuousness is simulated. Wash off its paint and strip it of its gawgawed trappings, and it stands forth the wan and wretched object it really is. There is better work in store for the Harvard Musical Association than the performance of such wretched stuff. Liszt has written some capital music for the piano, and there his love for innovation has been a source of profit to the world, but where he has ventured outside this narrow limit he has been a complete failure, and this truth cannot be too soon understood and acknowledged. We sincerely trust we have heard the last of his hideous orchestral ravings.

Haydn's Symphony, which followed, was an unutterable relief. Though by no means the best of the composer's works, its form, its purpose, its beauty and its freshness, struck a sympathetic chord in every heart. It was the intelligence of Ulysses against the brute force of Polyphemus. Though almost childish in its innocence and naïveté, it is worth a thousand such savage and incoherent howlings as "*Tasso*." It was not clearly given, and showed signs of insufficient rehearsing. The slow movement in particular was played in a very slovenly manner. It was perhaps fortunate that it was preceded by the symphonic poem, or the faulty way in which it was rendered might have been more palpable; but the ears of the audience had been so deluged with discords that two or three more were scarcely worth the notice. However, despite shortcomings, we are thankful that the work was on the programme. We trust that we shall hear more of the same character at the coming Harvard concerts. While there are so many similar productions by the old masters that the public have not heard, and with which it is necessary they should become acquainted, it is folly to waste time on the meaningless and valueless music of the future. The time taken for the rehearsal of the latter can be more wisely spent in preparing better works.

Rubinstein's Piano Concerto in G is a somewhat difficult, brilliant, and fatuous aberration. It is never strikingly original, but is often commonplace. In fact, Rubinstein, in writing this work, seems to have been laboring under a species of *cacoethes loquendi*, without having anything to say worth the listening to. Whether Mr. Lang was dispirited by the nature of the work he had undertaken to perform, or whether he was not in a favorable mood for playing, we cannot say, but we were disappointed with his performance. It was not as clear as we have the right to expect from him. Many of the passages rolled from under his fingers in a mutilated form, and there was an absence of variety in his style which was almost monotonous. At the same time there was little in the composition to inspire him, and we have no doubt his relief at its termination was no less than that of the audience.

The overture to "*Oberon*," which ended the performance, received a brilliant interpretation. On the whole, the concert was unsatisfactory. Liszt and Rubinstein cast a chill over it that nothing could completely remove. The intonation was far from perfect, and at times the clarinets and oboes differed nearly a quarter of a tone in pitch; nor were the bassoons immaculate in this respect. The symphony, as we have said, was not justly dealt by, and for the first time during the season we were disappointed with the manner in which the orchestra acquitted itself.

Bright's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, FEB. 10, 1872.

"Harvard" Symphony Concerts.

The series (of ten) is two-thirds over, the interest still on the increase. The sixth programme (Jan. 18) was as follows:

- Toccata in F, composed for Organ.....J. S. Bach.
Arranged for Orchestra by H. Esser.
Piano-forte Concerto, in D-minor, No. 8.....Mozart.
Allegro. Romanza. Rondo Prestissimo.
Richard Hoffman.
*** Symphony in A-minor, (No. 8), Op. 15.....N. W. Gade.
Presto. Andante sostenuto. Allegretto. Finale.
** Adagio and Rondo, from the Clarinet Concerto in A flat.....C. M. von Weber.
Ernest Weber.
* Piano-forte Solos.....Chopin.
a. Nocturne in B. Op. 32, No. 1.
b. Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53.
Richard Hoffman.
Overture to "*Fierabras*".....Schubert.

The star prefixed means given for the first time in these concerts; two stars, for the first time (publicly) in Boston; three stars, for the first time in this country.

Bach's great Organ Toccata—more distinctly, vividly, if less massively and grandly, set before us through the orchestra, than it is likely to be through the impersonal and accentless medium for which it was composed,—had already in one or two of the earlier Harvard seasons made an impression worth recalling. This time its titanic and perennial vigor, its wonderful buoyancy and fulness of life, its exhaustless beauty and variety, notwithstanding the clearest simplicity of purpose, were still more deeply and more generally felt. By the orchestra it gains accent, individuality, distinctness in the entrances and imitations of the theme in the different parts; also the aid of color contrasts, as where those strong full-chord responses are offset in the wind band against the broad and even polyphonic current of the strings;—it loses the oceanic depth and volume, the roar as of many waters, especially the massive bass of the great Organ, so that the infinite and mystical suggestion of that impersonal instrument of instruments is put to flight by shall we say excess of sunshine. In the transcription its internal structure is more quickly recognized by most ears, clear outline is perceived where once was vagueness, the work is better understood, and therefore more enjoyed. In the same way a fugue well played on the piano is clearer than it can be on the organ. Such at least is the experience of nearly all beginners, that is to say the mass of any public audience; always excepting some poetic souls, in whom the mystical element is strong, and who can feel and love, and hold communion through the seashore mystery and murmur of great organ music without understanding it or caring to trace out its form or scan its rhythm; for one may feel and own the spirit of an art work though he know nothing of its law. Herr Esser certainly has helped us to a clearer perception of the genius and the art of Bach, though purists will not cease protesting against all "arrangements" as unorthodox. But what a glorious creation (living creature almost), what a power this same Toccata is! What a sustaining, strengthening charm it exercises! It holds us up as in the hollow of its hand. It took possession of the orchestra and through them of the audience.

Mozart after Bach came well prepared and welcome; and that Concerto in D minor, played only once before (last winter by Miss Mehlig), is one of his finest works alike for the piano and the orchestra. We count it greatly to the credit of a pianist now-a-days to choose one of Mozart's Concertos for his performance in a concert of this kind; it shows (*ceteris paribus*) a sound artistic feeling, an interest in a noble composition as such, and a wish to save it from oblivion in the midst of newer and more dazzling things, which is stronger than the love of personal display. The pianists of the day, even the most classical and

earnest, are shy of such comparatively modest tasks, and turn too willingly away from them to others which afford a greater opportunity to show their mastery of all the modern problems of pianism. Among Mozart's Concertos, they will readily admit, are found some of the most admirable creations of his genius; simple tasks, it may be, for the pianist, but exquisite in the ensemble with the orchestra, forming perfect wholes too fair to be forgotten. How shall these be saved to the world, where shall they ever get a hearing, if not in just such concerts as these, of which the spirit and the sole aim is to make Art, truth, beauty, genius paramount, and personal ambition of the least account; each individual talent losing (and thus most truly finding) itself in joint production of an artistic whole? Is not the composition of a Mozart a matter of more interest than the personal prestige of any solo player? Will there ever be a perfect concert until vanity and self-esteem give place to the much more delightful and more quickening incentive of a pure devotion to the ministry of Art? We thank the artist, therefore, who is not above helping us to know the worth and beauty of Mozart's Concertos. And we thank Mr. RICHARD HOFFMAN for the conscientious manner, and the consummate skill and taste with which he executed his part in that Concerto in D minor, which is commonly understood to be the one that gives more prominence to the piano than the most of Mozart's, while it is reckoned his best Concerto as a whole. Certainly the orchestral part has beauties which a score of hearings would not exhaust, and the musicians all cooperated with zeal and delicacy. Mr. Hoffman won the general sympathy at once by his quiet, manly, and artistic bearing, as well as his youthful, fresh appearance, though he is of middle age and ranked among the best pianists in New York full twenty years ago. He has a clear, crisp, vital touch, and a technique so precise and clean and even, lending a pearly roundness to each tone even in the finest demi-semi-quaver groups, that you get as it were an exact photographic reproduction of the music. But the interpretation was also refined, exquisite in its gradations of light and shade, true in conception and in sympathetic feeling of his author; we could not ask for a finer reading of Mozart. What, for instance, could be finer, more absorbing to the listener than his rendering of the passage in the slow movement where the piano carries on the simple leading melody so long alone? His execution of the Chopin pieces was perhaps more remarkable as an exact, cool reproduction, without affectation or sentimental nonsense, of the written music, than as showing deep affinity with Chopin. The tempo was almost too rigid; yet there was delicacy, grace, light and shade enough, and in the Polonaise a fire, an energy, and a masterly way of working up a long *crescendo*, which were quite remarkable and made a great impression. Mr. Hoffman's playing has its interesting individuality, while it proves the master by the ordinary tests, and his visit to our city (too long delayed) will be counted among the most pleasant incidents of this uncommonly rich season.

The Symphony by Gade was approached not without some misgiving; our experience so far having confirmed the common warning, that though he has written seven symphonies, he has never again reached the height of his earliest, in C minor. This our concerts had verified in previous trials of the second (in E) and of the fourth (B flat.) Most of the audience, therefore, must have been agreeably disappointed by the beauty, the fine imaginative, romantic charm of this one in A minor. If not a great Symphony, it is a lovely one; poetic in its mood, refined in every detail of expression; not commonplace if not decidedly original; suggesting Mendelssohn more by affinity of nature than by any imitation. Alike in its serious and its playful movements, it is all tender, delicate, and clinging to the shade, although the instrumental colors are richly blended and sometimes charmingly

contrasted. You may listen for some time and not suspect the *Presto* tempo of the first movement, it cuts the air with such an even wing, and in a mood (seemingly) so still and dreamy, that you might fancy it a smooth *Andante*. The *Andante* itself is in a more deeply serious mood, to which you pleasantly surrender yourself. The *Allegretto* is a most delicate, bewitching bit of fairy humor, and the *Finale* full of fire, and eke of difficult and nervous work for the violins, to which they proved fully equal; indeed the whole Symphony was capitally rendered. It is one of the best works, not of a Titan, like Beethoven, but of a genial, genuine tone-poet of a gentler, less commanding mould.

In the clarinet Concerto, which, though somewhat of a common, older fashion in its form and motives, has yet the Weber individuality and charm, Mr. ERNEST WEBER showed to fine advantage that beauty and richness of tone, that easy, finished, tasteful execution for which his instrument has been noted for two seasons in our orchestra; his effort met with warm and merited applause; and the brightness of such a solo on the most human of wind instruments added an element of freshness to the programme. Schubert's grandest Overture makes more impression every time that it is heard.

The seventh Concert (Feb. 1) offered the following somewhat exceptional and yet instructive bill of fare:

Overture to "Coriolan".....Beethoven.
 *Tasso: Lamento e Trionfo" (Symphonic Poem)....Liszt.
 **Symphony, No. 3 (Breitkopf and Härtel), in E flat. Haydn.
 Adagio and Vivace assai. Adagio. Menuetto. Vivace.
 ***Pianoforte Concerto, No. 3, in G.....Rubinstein.
 Allegro moderato. Andante. Allegro risoluto.
 B. J. Lang.
 Overture to "Oberon".....Weber.

That this contrasting side by side of new with old; of works of clever, pretentious talent with creations of undoubted genius; of ambitious striving for would-be originality with real inspirations of sincere art, produced precisely the effect anticipated by those who framed the programme, is proved by the discussions which followed in musical circles and by the predominant tone of the newspaper criticisms, of which (in their variety) we have copied some marked specimens on a preceding page. For this was meant to be, as far as possible a pleasing, but mainly an instructive programme in regard to a much mooted musical question of the day. To gratify for once the party who complain of what one has called the "ungenial conservatism" shown in the persistent exclusion of the names of Liszt and Wagner from these programmes,—a party never very numerous in the Harvard audience, and which has dwindled to a very small minority since the liberal allowance of such music granted in the Thomas programmes,—one of the "*Symphonische Dichtungen*" of Liszt, the "*Tasso*" (promised a year ago, but postponed on account of the non-arrival of the music from Germany), was made a feature of the concert. Time was when this would have been a hazardous experiment with a public of unsettled taste or tendency in art; when mere brilliancy and startling effect, like gaudy pictures in a gallery, might have dazzled many and blinded them to a perception of the finer beauties of more sincere and unpretending works of truly inspired genius, to put which in their proper light and make them well appreciated is and has ever been a leading motive of these concerts. But that time seems to have passed; a Boston audience can now be trusted to know wheat from chaff, and after listening with a curious interest to questionable new things, to feel fresh life and charm in true things even if their form be old. And, by the way, "ungenial" is an unfortunate term to apply to this sort of conservatism, so simply and sincerely constant to the old love; for, if there be any virtue which can at all times, and without the smallest reservation, be ascribed to any and every one of the classical masterworks of Haydn, Mozart, Beetho-

ven, &c., it is the thorough *geniality* of all their music; while the grand objection to these modern strivings after new effects, is, not their departure from conventional form, not their non conformity in any way to long accepted and beloved models, not their reflection, it may be, of the new spirit of the age, not their heroic recognition of the principle of progress and their chivalric ambition to do something "epoch-making;"—but, that, whatever else we may find in them, whatever pleasing details, bold original suggestions, new intensities of instrumental power or color, still we feel they are not *genial*; they do not transport us into that "peace which passeth understanding," that sweet and pure Art atmosphere in which our spirits are in tune with the divine love and wisdom of the Universe; the homeliest old Symphony of Father Haydn can do this for us; Liszt may pile Ossa upon Pelion, he cannot scale the heavens.

The "new school" element in the programme was represented mainly by the "Poem" of Liszt, and in a degree by Rubinstein's Concerto. These were offset by the Haydn Symphony in the middle, and by two of the very best of characteristic classical Overtures, in contrast to each other, at the beginning and the close. For an expression of deep inward pain and passion, of the struggles of a proud gloomy soul with destiny, of a fiery life storming itself out, there was the "*Coriolanus*" Overture by Beethoven: how intense, concise and brief is the expression! how completely it embodies the whole tragedy! yet how it realizes the repose and symmetry of Art, how it throws the divine, reconciling, comforting Art halo over all, and makes the whole thing beautiful! Then came the "*Tasso*": his Lament and Triumph; the poet's morbid sorrows, persecution, madness, and his triumph (too long deferred) when he was crowned at Rome. How different this expression! Madness and grief enough, tumultuous jubilee enough: but what has become of Art the Comforter? how has the bewildering chaos of musical surprises and effects, not without now and then some fleeting mirage of beauty, helped to put our souls in tune?

Liszt tells us that he composed the work when he was asked to write an Overture for a performance of Goethe's "*Tasso*" on the centennial anniversary of Goethe's birth in 1849. In spite of Goethe, he owns that he was more under the influence of Byron's presentation of the gloomy side of the picture in composing the first part of it. Goethe comes in where the music brightens, we suppose. "*Tasso* lived and suffered in Ferrara, he was avenged in Rome, he still lives in the people's songs of Venice. These three moments are inseparable from his imperishable fame. To reproduce them musically, we first summoned up his great shadow as it to-day wanders over the Lagoons of Venice; then there appeared to us the proud and melancholy face of him a looker on at the feasts of Ferrara, where he created his masterworks; and finally we followed him to Rome, the Eternal City, which placed the crown upon his head and glorified in him the martyr and the poet."

The composition opens with a lugubrious and morbid motive (*fortissimo*, very slow) in the basses, which reappears repeatedly throughout the work, even in the blaze of triumph at the end. This theme Liszt says he used to hear sung, to the first lines of Tasso's "Jerusalem," by the gondoliers in the lagoons of Venice;—weird, spectral boatmen, one would think, their gaunt forms, like their hoarse voices, magnified through the mist! This theme is ugly, and if it might have been developed into something truly musical by artistic treatment, the composer has not done it. Then follow very sick chromatic passages; then wild outbursts (*Allegro strepitoso*), like a carnival of fiends, spasms of agony and madness; a moment of repose and sweeter music (*adagio mesto*); groans, and shooting pains, and melancholy moans, and furious outbursts again; and then the relief of a graceful minuet-like melody, of a taking and somewhat novel

character,—the one thing that haunts you afterward, besides the gloomy gondolier theme. With all the distraction and noise there is a certain dramatic (rather than a musical) progress to the end, culminating in loud, hoarse martial strains of triumph, that fatigue the brain and almost stun you by the weight and din of braying brass and drums and triangles. There are beautiful passages no doubt; charming traits of instrumentation; (violoncellos, taking the burden of almost any theme that is musical, always sound well); there are fine promises, not kept even to the ear. But on the whole we must repeat what we remarked a year or two ago: We cannot but regard that as false art, which seeks new field for originality in giving unredeemed and cheerless, fruitless utterance to those gloomy moods, which, however they may enter into the experience of all, even the noblest souls, and however essential perhaps to the spiritual economy of life in the long run, have really no right to public expression, but belong, by every modest instinct of propriety, to strictest privacy, at least until the discord be resolved,—as it is, for instance, in a true Art work like the *Coriolanus* overture.

We are far from saying that the "Tasso" is without interest or charm in spite of its overstrained and ugly passages. It finds admirers for a time, but the abiding impression is one of distraction and of weariness. The Haydn Symphony, after it, was an "unutterable relief." It was like walking into the Spring air and grassy fields out of a hot and crowded ball-room or a tumultuous mob. And so it was generally felt, notwithstanding the fact that it had scarcely been rehearsed, though new to the orchestra, for Liszt and Rubinstein had consumed all the time. The execution therefore was not as good as it might have been; the theme of the Allegro was begun too *pianissimo* and did not stamp its form at once upon the mind; there were discords among reed instruments, &c., &c. Yet the beauty of the Symphony was unmistakable, and did away with the gloom and weariness of the Liszt piece before the Rubinstein came on.

Now in this Concerto we found more enjoyment than the sterner critic we have quoted. It is not to be counted in the Lisztian category. It is at least musical, continuous, and not refractory even to the classical Concerto form. Delicate and winning traits predominate. It would not do to be heard immediately after "Tasso," to be sure; but after a healthy walk with Haydn intervening, it need be neither cloying nor oppressive. There are striking beauties in all three movements; the first has themes and phrases somewhat in the vein of softer passages in Liszt's "Preludes," but not enough to pass for imitations. The *Andante*, with its pensive, tender utterances in fragmentary Recitative, is charming for a while; the fault is, that it becomes prolix and vague. Think, in contrast, of the brief but wonderful recitative in Beethoven's G-major Concerto! The last movement is very dramatic and exciting, full of interest, and, like the whole, full of extraordinary difficulties both for piano and orchestra. The instrumentation is elaborate without overloading, often fine. Mr. LANG played it, we thought, admirably, doing the work all justice, though the task was not one of the most thankful. Hardly a work of genius, at the best half inspired, the Concerto was surely worth the pains.

How splendidly the Overture to *Oberon* came in to prove the quickening power of genius after all this!

The eighth concert will be on Friday, Feb. 23, and will consist of a Symphony in C, by Raff (first time); Beethoven's C-minor Concerto, played by J. C. D. PARKER; a Concert Overture by Gade (first time); Andante and Adagio from Beethoven's "Prometheus"; and the charming Scherzo from Schumann's "Overture, Scherzo and Finale."

English Opera.—"The Water-carrier."

First of all let us correct an error in our former notice: It was not Mme. VANZINI, but Miss CLARA DOMIA (Miss Barnett), who took the part of the Countess in "The Marriage of Figaro," and more artistically than she has commonly had credit for.

An "event" of true importance in this most eventful season has been the first introduction to our public of Cherubini's charming little opera,—a universal favorite in Germany—"The

Water-Carrier," or as the French call it, *Les deux Journées*. The music is for the most part of a very quiet, unpretending, thoroughly sincere, artistic character; and there is not a great deal of it—at least only just enough—in proportion to the large amount of spoken dialogue. But the plot (described in our last) is a very fine one; and simply as a play, in dialogue and incident and stage effect, the work is fascinating. Perhaps on this account it had a greater popular success than music so unsensational, so simple and yet so learned, and containing scarcely any personal appeals in the shape of great arias and cavatinas for the singer, could have commanded at a single hearing. For this is music whose beauty is so delicate and true, so unobtrusive, that piece after piece may pass unappreciated, and seem tame and common, though it is sure to grow upon one who has any music in his soul. No one can fail to feel, however, that he has listened to a unique and perfect whole; every note in it tells its story and no more; every phrase is characteristic; every bit of orchestral accompaniment or interlude just pertinent to character and situation, suggesting just enough and no more. Therein the master shows himself, in this masterly chaste abstinence from all superfluous and overstrained expression. To know and to love such a work is of more good to one, than to have all of Verdi's operas by heart. And yet this music, where it seems simple, is not commonplace; where it is learned, it is not pedantic, but compresses meaning, feeling and expression into short forms of subtle texture safe from all danger of becoming hack-nied.

The two greatest compositions in it are the well-known superb Overture, which borrows no themes from the Opera itself, yet forms a fitting introduction; and the Finale of the first Act. The curtain rises on a sweet and picturesque domestic scene in the Water-Carrier's house. There is talk enough to explain the story before the first strain of music comes; and this is the song of the Savoyard, his son, a tender, song of gratitude, of melody most simple and yet most refined; true gold in contrast to the sentimental ballad tunes of our day,—some little turn or modulation only, now and then, showing the master hand. This was sweetly sung by Mr. TOM CARL, and its essential melody clings to the character throughout the play. Then comes the Water-Carrier himself,—Mr. AINSLEY COOK, whose admirable make-up, song, action, ready humor, made the part throughout seem real. His song, too, is of an even simpler kind, but full of the heartiness and frankness of the character; its tune returns too in the orchestra to herald his approach in later scenes. Next comes the Countess (Mme. PAREPA-ROSA) and the Count Armand (CASTLE) seeking shelter, and a Trio, of rare skill and beauty, finely expressing the relations of the noble pair of refugees, is worthy of Mozart, rising to intensity of feeling. The great Finale begins with a Sextet, where the son (Antonio) recognizes his benefactor in the Count, and in a series of expressive movements and commingling themes, aided by opportune suggestions every instant from the orchestra, proceeds to portray all the intricacy of the relations of the persons, all the hurry and agitation of the plan of escape, and all the shifting hues of feeling; passing soon into a sublime chorus of gratitude to heaven, which returns again to close the act. The effect was electrical, so that the chorus had to be repeated, and, as it was used again to close the opera instead of the slighter chorus used by Cherubini, it made four times that this chorus was given in an evening and yet not to satiety. Parepa's voice soared splendidly in the high passages of this finale, and the whole piece was most effective.

Act II opens with one of those soft, contrapuntally woven bits of orchestration, which occur ever and anon, and which always mean something, always express the situation better than anything else could do it; while they are beautiful in themselves if listened to attentively, like the finest Organ music. Here the scene is the guardhouse at the gates of Paris; the music means the silence of the early dawn; then the reveille is beaten, and then the splendid chorus of the soldiers rings out crisp and clear; and when allusion to their employer, Cardinal Mazarin, is made (for they are Catholic Italian soldiers) how mysteriously and beautifully the orchestra in undertones insinuates another of those contrapuntal church-like strains! Of the stirring melodrama, the bits of Trio, solo, chorus, &c., that fill out the Act, and the fine march of the retreating soldiers, we can only hint.

The third Act mainly wears another color, opening with an introduction of most fresh and lovely rural music, and a joyful naive wedding chorus of the village youths and maidens, which it is happiness to call back to mind. The tragical ensemble where the refugees are discovered, rising to a climax where the Water-Carrier rushes in with a full pardon, is of the most exciting interest.

All the singers entered fully into the spirit of their parts, Mme. Parepa and Mr. Cook fairly dividing the chief honors. Madame looked positively handsome, acted with great vivacity and naturalness, and sang superbly. The only disturbance of the unique and fine impression of the whole, was her interpolation of an Aria by Gounod, patching Cherubini's music with an ill-assorted and too brilliant pattern, and breaking the spell for a time, although it gave the prima donna an opportunity to show her power, which Cherubini did not think it worth while to provide. Miss DOMIA filled the pretty part of Marcellus capably well; and even the old man's part, Dan-

iel, acquired importance in the hands of Mr. SEGUIN. CARL ROSA had drilled his orchestra very thoroughly, and everything went well, much to the credit of the taste and enterprise and courage of the management and all concerned. The crowded house and the enthusiasm which hailed the first performance, were repeated in like ample measure at the second.

CHAMBER CONCERTS.—Messrs. LEONHARD and EICHRECH gave the last of their Six Matinees on the 25th ult. The selections were: Beethoven's early Trio, Op. 1, No. 3, in C minor; a Tenor Recitative and Aria ("Frohe Hirten eilt"), from Bach's Christmas Oratorio; a couple of Chopin pieces (Nocturne, op. 37, No. 2, and Scherzo, op. 20); and for a glorious finale the great Schumann Quintet, op. 44, for piano and strings. A true artistic glow pervaded the entire performance, felt throughout the well filled room. The Quintet went to a charm, the solemn march-like second movement with its wonderful variations making a profound impression. Mr. LEONHARD was most happy in the Chopin interpretations,—two of the choicest inspirations of that piano poet. Mr. GLOUGNER-CASTELLI sang artistically, but in rather a dry voice, the florid (*coloratura*) Aria of Bach, the effect of which was much heightened by the masterly piano accompaniment arranged from the incomplete score by ROBERT FRANKS expressly at the request of the concert givers. In gratitude for this service, they announced their intention to give this week an extra Matinee in compliment to FRANKS; but to gain time to make the demonstration more substantial, it has been postponed for some weeks. Due notice will be given.

NEW YORK, FEB. 5.—The third concert of the Philharmonic Society was given, at the Academy of Music, last Saturday evening, with the following programme:

Symphony, No. 4, D minor.....Schumann.
Aria, "With verdure clad".....Haydn.
Mlle. Henriette Corradi.
Concerto, for violin.....Max Bruch.
Sig. P. Sarasate.
Overture: "Macbeth".....Helmefetter.
Aria from "Il Polluto".....Donsetti.
Overture: "Leonore," No. 3.....Beethoven.

The most interesting number was of course the Schumann Symphony, the same which was played at the Thomas concert last month. This afforded a good opportunity for comparing the two orchestras; and it seemed to me that, while the Philharmonic is the stronger and in some respects the better balanced of the two, yet in that delicate shading and fine ensemble, which can only be attained by long and constant practice, the Thomas Orchestra excels. Still the Symphony was very well played, and those who braved the storm to go and hear it were repaid for their pains. Signor Sarasate merited and received much applause for his rendering of the Violin Concerto. Mlle. Corradi was hardly passable in the Aria from the *Creations*; and the insertion, in the programme of a Philharmonic Concert, of a piece like the second one assigned to her (an aria from *I Martiri*) must be regarded as an innovation, in gross violation of good taste and, unhappily, not without precedent in the annals of the society.

The musical event of last week was a concert given by Miss ANNA MEHLIG at Steinway Hall on Wednesday evening, (her first appearance in New York since her return from Europe).

The programme presented the following choice selections:

Grand Fantasia in C, op. 15.....Schubert.
Miss Mehlig.
Solo for Violin. a. Air from Suite in D major.....Bach.
b. Gavotte.....Vieuxtemps.
Mr. Wenzel Kopta.
Canzonetta, "Quando miro quel bel ciglio".....Mozart.
Miss Antoinette Sterling.
Solo for Cello: "Souvenir de Spa".....Serafin.
Mr. F. Bergner.
Piano Solos. a. Ballade, A flat.....Chopin.
b. Invitation à la Valse.....Arr. by Tausig.
"Dichterliebe" Two Songs, Nos. 13 and 14.....Schumann.
Solo Violin: Airs Hongroises.....Ernst.
Fantasia for Piano: "Don Juan".....Liszt.

This noble list of pieces could hardly receive better treatment than it did at the hands of Miss Mehlig and the trio of excellent artists who assisted her.

Schubert's great Fantasia was superbly played, and the "Wanderer" was never more pathetic than when sung under the artist's fingers in the *Adagio*. The finale, too, afforded the pianist an excellent opportunity for the display of her talents. In Tausig's fine arrangement of Weber's "Invitation" she played beautifully and received a hearty encore, to which she responded with one of Chopin's *Nocturnes*. In this and in the *Ballade* her playing was, to me, a trifle less satisfactory: it may be because there is in Chopin's music a certain sentiment which, in the concert room, is apt to elude both performer and hearer; it is emphatically *salon* music, and the hearers, as well as the player, need to be chosen.

Miss Sterling's rendering of the two Schumann *Lieder* was as near perfection as any thing it has been my fortune to hear, while Messrs. Bergner and Kopta bore their share in the honors of the evening.

Among the other concerts, during the past fortnight, mention must be made of a matinee given by S. B. MILLS at Steinway Hall, Jan. 27. He was assisted by Sig. Sarasate, Mr. Bergner and others. Among the selections played were the "Kreutzer" Sonata and Mendelssohn's C-minor Trio. This is the first of a series of similar matinees. The second is announced to take place on Saturday, Feb. 10.

On Monday evening, Jan. 22, a series of Chamber music concerts was begun by Dr. DAMROSCH and Herr PRUCKER, at Steinway's smaller Hall. The programme offered a fine selection of classical pieces, beginning with Beethoven's Sonata in G, op. 30 (piano and violin) and closing with Schubert's Trio in B flat, in which Mr. Berger took part. Miss Helene Damrosch sang several songs by Mendelssohn and Schumann.

Last Monday evening Miss CHRISTINE LASAR gave a concert at Steinway's. She sang the "Ah! non credes" and the following Rondo from the *Sonnambula*, and a Ballad, "She wandered down the mountain side." She was assisted by Dr. Damrosch and Mr. Mills. At the Stadt Theatre, *Don Juan* has given place to *Jeannette*, which will be followed on Wednesday by "The Merry Wives of Windsor." The PAREFA-ROSA English Opera begins this evening with "A Masked Ball," but SARTLEY will not appear until next week, when *Zampa* is announced.

A. A. C.

MILWAUKEE, JAN. 26.—The 200th Concert of our Musical Society last week, under the directorship of Mr. Balatka, brought several novelties, in the main very agreeable, though perhaps a trifle too "Wagnerian" to suit the taste of well-balanced minds. The programme was as follows:

"Ocean," 2d Symphony, C major. A. Rubinstein.
a. Allegro maestoso. b. Adagio con moto. c. Allegro.
d. Adagio et allegro con fuoco.
"To thee, noble Edifice, my Greeting" aria for Soprano,
from "Der Tannhaeuser" R. Wagner.
"On the Open Sea" By general request. Chorus for
male voices with orchestra accompaniment F. Moehring.
"Fantasia Caprice," solo for violin. H. Vieuxtemps.
Mr. Henry De Clerque.
"The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God." Full chorus
with orchestral accompaniment. L. van Beethoven.
"Thou art gone far away." For Tenor. H. von Truh.
Scene and Ensemble from "Der Tannhaeuser." Septetto,
with accomp. of full cho. and orch. R. Wagner.
Fantasia on "National Air." Paraphrase de concert for
orchestra. H. Balatka.

The performance of such difficult compositions, left much to be desired, of course, from a critical point of view. The orchestra, however, acquitted itself well, as usual, being composed entirely of professionals, and Rubinstein's Symphony was generally appreciated as the most substantial portion of the intellectual feast of the evening. To criticize the work itself, after one hearing, is out of the question. The *Fantasia Caprice*, by Vieuxtemps, was performed by Mr. De Clerque, formerly of Chicago, in a truly artistic manner, and pleased the audience so much that an *encore* resulted, to which Mr. De C. responded with the "Reverie" by the same composer. I could but think, however, that something more novel or classical might have been offered to the public. The *Caprice* has been played, fiddled and scraped, by professionals and amateurs during the past twenty years. The fragments from "Tannhaeuser" might have been omitted, I think, with profit to audience and singers. They appear rather tame in the concert-room. The Soprano solo was sung by Mrs. Gelsberg, an old favorite of concert-goers here, and she was loudly *encored*. Her voice, however, shows signs of decay, and will hardly enable her to attack such compositions as flow from the prolific pen of Herr Wagner. The Septet from the same opera suffered materially at the hands of the tenor, a young man of more than ordinary self-assurance, but possessing very little voice or method. His attempt to sing the high C brought down the house with laughter. He shall remain nameless here. Beethoven's noble hymn "The Heavens are telling," sung by the Society's chorus, is a grand composition, and was given with precision and effect. The tenor solo, "Thou art gone far away," might have been omitted with propriety. The young amateur who sang the piece needs a little more voice and schooling to make his efforts agreeable in the concert-room. Balatka's *Fantasia on a National Air* (The Star Spangled Banner), is a pleasing composition, of fine instrumentation, and did not fail to rouse the usual patriotic feelings among the audience.

F.

VIENNA. The Philharmonic Society opened, as usual, the concert season for the winter. The first programme included, among other compositions, Cherubini's *Anacreon Overture*; Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, Op. 64 (played by Herr Robert Heckmann, from Leipzig); Herr R. Wagner's "Huldigungsmarsch," and Beethoven's A major Symphony.—Herr Ullmann's Concert Troupe have been here, but, if report speaks true, they did not on this occasion turn out a pecuniary success.—Herr Joseph Wieniawski, the pianist, and brother of the violinist, has announced a concert.—Herr Hellmesberger has begun his usual Quartet Concerts.—At the Imperial Operahouse, Herr Franz Doppler's *Judith* has been revived, with Madame Dustmann in the principal part. The next revival was Marschner's *Hans Heiling*, by some persons considered his best opera. This was the first of Marschner's works ever performed in the new house.—At a recent meeting of the Männergesangsverein, it was resolved that the Schubert Festival shall be held in May. The precise date is not definitely fixed. The proceedings will include a grand concert and *Liedertafel*, in which other Associations will be invited to take an active part. A

medal will be cast to commemorate the event. The excavations are already made in the Park for the foundations of the pedestal on which the Composer's statue will stand.

MILAN. Signor Francesco Lucca, a music publisher, has given Signor Strazza a commission for a full length marble statue of Donizetti. When the statue is completed, it will be placed in the vestibule of the Scala, Signor Lucca having offered it to the Town Council for that purpose, and the Town Council having accepted the offer thus liberally made.—The management of the Scala has issued its prospectus for the ensuing season. The prospectus promises no less than five operas, among which will be *Aida*, Verdi; *Il Giuramento*, Mercadante; *Il Franco Arciere* (Der Freischütz), Weber; and *La Forza del Destino*. The season will be inaugurated with the last-named opera.

BAYREUTH. The committee appointed to select a site for Herr R. Wagner's *Nibelungen* Theatre here have chosen the Stückberg. The Stückberg belongs to Herr Rose, a large sugar-refiner, who may not feel inclined to sell it, but no very great apprehensions are entertained on that score. The site, close to the Brandenburg suburb, is a tolerably elevated piece of table-land, commanding to the east and south charming portions of the Fichtelberg and French Switzerland. Besides being, in the opinion of the committee, particularly well adapted by its magnificent position for the performance of an eminently poetic work, it possesses another advantage: excavations for deep "sinks" can be made without coming upon water, which is not the case elsewhere in the vicinity. The ascent, too, is very gentle, and consequently by no means fatiguing. The choice of the committee meets with general approbation. There is a second question which may be regarded as no less satisfactorily solved: the lodging, and providing for, from 2,000 to 3,000 visitors.

RECENT GERMAN WORKS ON MUSIC.—For new books on music one has always to go to Germany, and the publications of the last three months present much that is interesting. First and foremost is the collection of "Popular Lectures on the Formation of a Critical Musical Taste," by Hermann Küster (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel), which should be read by every one who wishes to enjoy music understandingly. The lectures are clear and well expressed, and are full of excellent examples. The "Catechism of Composition," by J. E. Lobe (Leipzig: Weber), and the "Theoretical and Practical Study of Harmony and Music" of Leopold Heinze (Ober-Glogau: Handel), will carry the reader further into the practical knowledge of music. Among books of musical history and biography we must note "German Composers," by Dr. Emil Naumann (Berlin: Oppenheim), a series of lectures delivered at the Victoria Lyceum in 1870-71, devoted to the chief German composers, since Bach. The treatment of Meyerbeer and Wagner in one chapter is exceedingly singular. "The Great Piano-forte Virtuosi of Our Time" (Berlin: Behr), is a very entertaining collection of reminiscences of Liszt, Chopin, Tausig, and Henselt, by W. von Lenz, well known to the musical world by his studies on Beethoven. Lenz is now very old, and it can be seen from the title that the "our time" is not the present day with its Bülow and Rubinstein. Persons who remember Mendelssohn's description in his letters of his playing before Goethe will perhaps be interested in "Goethe and his Relations to Music," by W. Von Bock (Berlin: Schneider). Some new letters and recollections of Mendelssohn himself have just been published by his friend Eduard Devrient. We are glad to see the first volume of the complete writings and poems of Richard Wagner (Leipzig: Fritzsche), which contains, besides "Rienzi" and "Der Fliegende Holländer," the various sketches he published when he was earning his bread in Paris in 1840 and 1841. The best of these is "A Pilgrimage to Beethoven." Wagner then had much humor, and his style was pleasanter than now. His last brochure, "Beethoven," is very hard reading. The Beethoven Centenary of 1870 called out a number of memories, of which the best is "Beethoven Festival and the Art of the Present," by Ludwig Nohl (Wien: Braumüller), the biographer of Mozart, and an adherent of the new school. Ferdinand Hiller, the successor of Mendelssohn, and a violent partisan of the old school, has also published a charming essay on Beethoven, which is printed separately and also in his little book, "From the Tone-Life of our Time" (Leipzig: Leuckart). This book contains in addition articles on Rossini, Hauptmann and Bach, and an amusing sketch called "Too Much Music," directed against the tendency to riot in musical noise at dinners and balls and in gardens of all sorts.—Nation.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC, Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

- Over where the Shamrock grows. Song and Chorus. 3. C to f. Dumont. 30
The sunset, my darling, is now on the waters. Pretty Irish ballad.
Chicago Rediviva. 3. Eb to e. G. U. D. 30
Good words from "Punch" set to music. For one voice or four voices.
Chicago's been burnt down in timber to-day, Chicago'll be built up in marble to-morrow.
Bird of the Night. 3. C to e. Hackleton. 30
Bird of the night,
I with thee would be taking my flight.
Very neat "bird-warbling" accompaniment, and sweet song.
The Sailor's Story. 3. D to d. Smart. 50
A very fine narrative song for a bold, manly voice. Easy and effective for a concert.
Two Castles. 3. A to f. Tours. 40
"I built a fairy castle,
It hovered in the air."
Musical story of the destruction of an air-castle, and very musical.
O that we two were Maying. 4. Eb to f. Gounod. 40
"O that we two were maying,—
O that we two sat dreaming,—
O that we two were sleeping,—
And our souls at home with God,"
are lines which hint at the quality of the quaint, rich poetry by Kingsley. The music shows Gounod's fine workmanship; German ingenuity and French elegance and taste.

To Deum. Aria from "Hamlet." 5. G. S. C. 1.25

If one hesitates, for a moment, to approve of a solemn Te Deum arranged from a new, popular opera, it must be remembered that this is a serious opera, and that a sacred piece would not be out of place in it. Requires skillful performer.

The Mississippi Twins. 3. G to f. Dumont. 40

"We are a pair of frisky mokes
Who never borrow pain."
Mrs. Sippl's handsome pair of twins appear on the illustrated title. Their sensation song and dance is very spirited.

I would if I were you. 3. F to f. Pratt. 40

"Speak out, and ask her like a man,
I would if I were you."

A pretty, comic love song. Illustrated title.

Instrumental.

Breakdown on the Swanee River. 4. B. F. W. Root. 35

Introduces "Old Folks at Home," and a kind of Banjo melody, in a very characteristic, piquant and brilliant way.

Willetta Waltz. 3. Ab. Parker. 30

Very brilliant and dance-able.

Sovenir de Pesth. Mazurka Etude. 4. D minor. Zahonyi. 35

A very beautiful and delicate Mazurka. The name of the author suggests Poland, and the music is worthy of one bred at the home of Chopin. But he may be Hungarian after all.

Cachuca Caprice. 5. Eb. Op. 79. Raff. 1.00

A fine piece and a peculiar one. Opens with two pages of music on the bass staff, something like a violoncello solo, followed by a succession of brilliant responses of right to left hand, and vice versa. Then comes a powerful page of octaves, and another of "chord melodies." Next we have a left hand melody accompanied. After this come variations full of arpeggios, staccato and grace-note passages, and at length three or four pages of a rapid, half-trilled "finale." Effective exhibition piece.

Love's Greeting. (Liebesgruss). 3. G. Op. 291. Jungmann. 30

Op. 291 "sounds old," but there is no lack of youthful grace and beauty in this sweet piece, which is quite worthy of one who is always a Jung-mann (Young-man.)

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked from 1 to 7. The key is marked with a capital letter, as C, B flat, &c. a small Roman letter marks the highest note, if on the staff, an italic letter the highest note, if above the staff.

